

| |
|----------------------------|
| Date Mailed May 4, 2000 |
|----------------------------|

BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Notification by Amherst Telephone Company
That It Intends to Increase Telephone Rates

170-TR-101

**NOTICE OF PROCEEDING AND INVESTIGATION
AND ASSESSMENT OF COSTS**

THIS IS A PROCEEDING opened in response to the notice received on April 7, 2000, from Amherst Telephone Company (Amherst, or applicant), that it intends to increase rates for local exchange telephone service at its Amherst, Polonia, and Rosholt exchanges in Portage, Marathon, and Waupaca Counties.

In 1999, Amherst, like many other local exchange telecommunications providers, raised its rates for business and residential 1-party service as permitted by Wis. Stat. § 196.218(3)(f). This increase, 52 cents per line for Amherst, was to recover universal service fund assessments imposed by the Commission on all providers, including Amherst, for the TEACH Educational Telecommunications Access Program (Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5)(a)5.), TEACH grants (Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5)(a)7.) and the telecommunications services at the UW System Campuses at River Falls, Stout, Superior, and Whitewater (Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5)(a)6.).

In this proceeding, applicant proposes to decrease rates by the 52 cents per month that recovered the TEACH and UW assessments, but to simultaneously increase rates by 52 cents through this Wis. Stat. § 196.213/215 process. The net impact on customers would be no change in rates at this time.

Amherst shall mail notice of this proposal to its customers on May 1, 2000. Under Wis. Stat. § 196.215(3)(a), the proposed rates will become effective July 1, 2000, as specified in the notice. Customers have the opportunity to petition the Commission for an investigation of the utility's rate increase.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Commission will investigate this matter under Wis. Stat. § 196.215(3)(a). If, within 60 days of the mailing of the utility's notice to customers, the Commission receives a petition from at least 476 customers requesting that the Commission determine rates, further investigation will be necessary. The utility's proposed increases may still go into effect; however, the rates will then be subject to refund.

The Commission considers it necessary, in order to carry out its duties, to investigate all books, accounts, practices, and activities of the applicant. The expenses incurred or to be incurred by the Commission which are reasonably attributable to such an investigation will be assessed against and collected from the applicant in accordance with the provisions of Wis. Stat. § 196.85 and Wis. Admin. Code ch. PSC 5.

The Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services, or employment. Any person with a disability who needs accommodations to participate in this proceeding or who needs to get this document in a different format should contact the case coordinator listed below.

Questions regarding this matter may be directed to case coordinator Tom Gross at (608) 267-2337 or (800) 225-7729.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, _____

By the Commission:

Lynda L. Dorr
Secretary to the Commission

LLD:TAG:tmg:law:g:\notice\pending\170-TR-101.doc